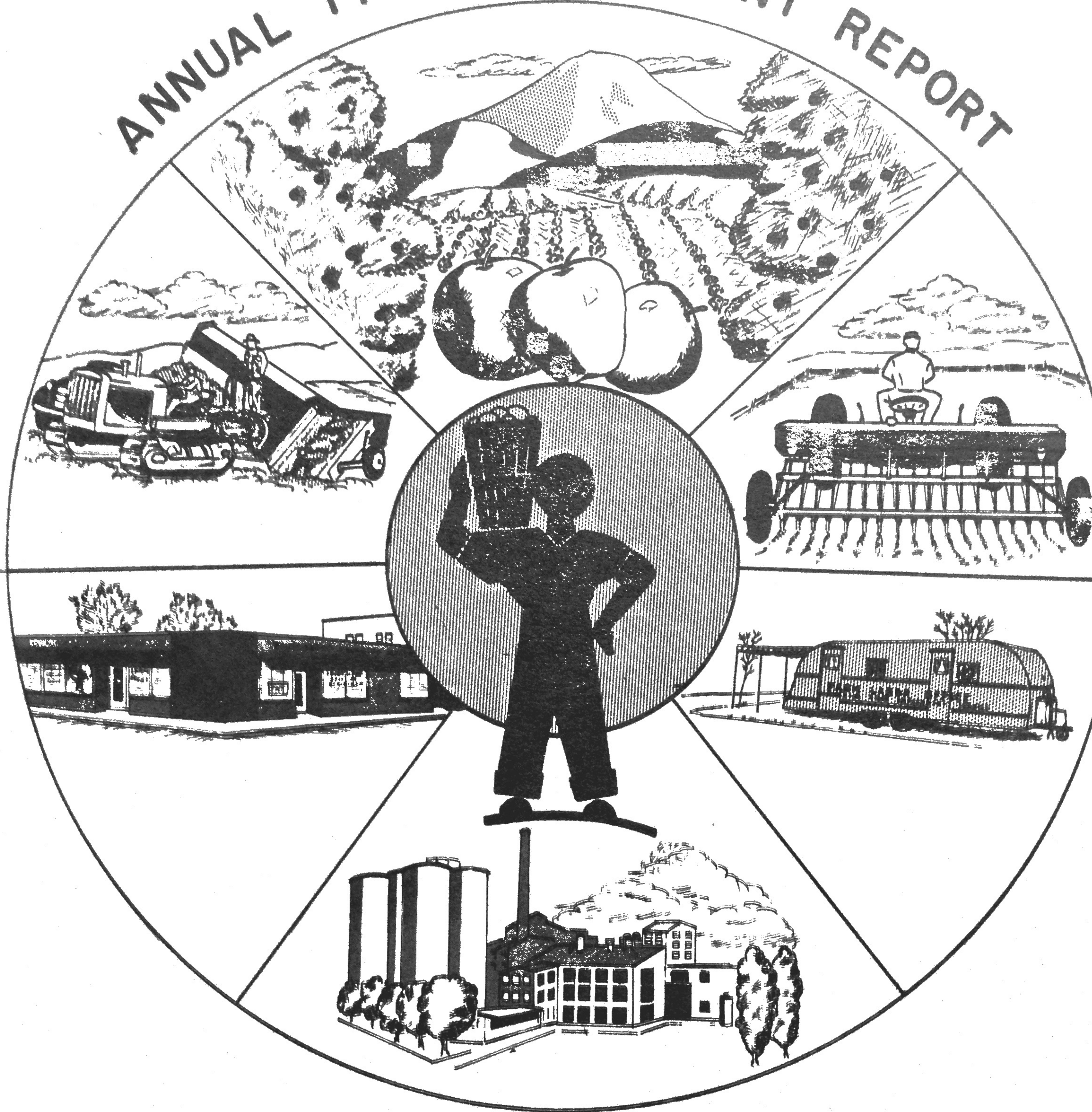


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ANNUAL FARM PLACEMENT REPORT 1953



WASHINGTON STATE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE
STATE OF WASHINGTON EMPLOYMENT SECURITY DEPARTMENT

FOREWORD

Washington is one of the nation's foremost agricultural states. The state produces somewhat more than its share of farm products, ranking as a leading producer of such crops as wheat, apples, pears, peas, berries, cranberries, grapes, potatoes, and hops. Crops are diversified and most have heavy seasonal labor requirements. For these reasons, recruitment problems in Washington are among the most difficult in the nation. Over the past few years the Employment Security Department has gone to considerable length to develop sources of farm labor and to perfect the techniques for getting farm workers to the right places at the right time.

During 1953 the normally difficult recruitment problem was complicated by abnormal weather conditions early in the year. Nevertheless, crops were harvested in good shape and only a few temporary shortage situations developed.

Three types of farm labor recruitment made noteworthy contributions to the success of the 1953 program--recruitment of American and Canadian Indians, special recruitment of workers from Texas, and day-haul programs. American and Canadian Indians were used in both western and eastern Washington in large numbers throughout the entire season, working in the harvest of such crops as strawberries, green peas, raspberries, hops, apples, and pears. Throughout the year local Employment Security Department offices reported 3,917 Indian placements.

Early in the season, when serious shortages threatened in the asparagus and pea harvests, a growers' representative and a representative of the Employment Security Department journeyed to Texas and, through the excellent cooperation of the Texas Employment Commission, were able to recruit over 2,000 workers for farm employers in Washington.

Another recruitment program receiving considerable attention in 1953 was the day-haul program. Day haul is particularly important in agricultural areas bordering on industrial centers, and is used extensively in the strawberry and bean harvests in western Washington. Forty-six cities and towns with 68 pick-up points were involved in this program. At peak it is estimated that 9,000 workers were being transported to the fields through day-haul arrangements made by local Employment Security Department offices.

Studies made early in the season indicated the probability of serious shortages of workers in several crops. On this basis the Employment Security Department certified the need for importation of a limited number of Mexican Nationals under the provisions of Public Law 78. Mexican Nationals comprise a very small fraction of the state's agricultural workers. From April 1 to November 1, 1953, they accounted for only 1.8 percent of the state's seasonal agricultural labor force. Except for a short period in late June and early July seldom more than 600 were employed at any one time; early in July the number reached as high as 1,700. Mexican Nationals provided emergency assistance to approximately 500 different farm employers during the 1953 season. They are used only when needed and, while few in number, augment the domestic labor force at critical periods.

The 1953 agricultural recruitment program was more than a problem of locating sources of farm workers. It involved a high degree of planning and community organization. Early in the year the Employment Security Department began laying plans for the coming season. Studies of crop acreage and prospective labor demand and supply were made. Various meetings were held with growers and associations to discuss the 1953 farm labor situation. As the season got under way, local offices mobilized local farm labor resources by such means as sound trucks and press and radio announcements. When local labor was inadequate, local offices called for help from

other local offices in the state, and the success of the harvest frequently depended on the ability to bring workers in from outside the area. As need developed, the department's mobile units and portable buildings were brought out and spotted in strategic locations. When farm labor demands subsided in one area, portable offices were moved to another center of activity. Meanwhile the farm labor supply was constantly being evaluated and all the resources of the department's 26 regular, 23 seasonal, and 3 casual labor offices were mobilized for an all-out effort to meet any possible shortage situation.

It is gratifying to be able to report that the Employment Security Department placed more workers with Washington farmers during 1953 than ever before in its history. During the year, 251,211 farm placements were made--about 28,000 more than in 1952.

4. Meetings were planned with both local office personnel and employers to explain the procedural requirements for obtaining Mexican Nationals and employers' responsibilities under the Mexican worker contract of employment.
5. Washington's 1953 estimate of labor requirements were presented at a March pre-season planning conference in Utah at which employment service representatives and employers of farm labor from eleven western states were represented. Of these states, Arizona, New Mexico, California, Oregon, Idaho, and Montana indicated they would cooperate in supplying Washington with harvest workers when needed.
6. All local office managers reviewed their plans for publicity releases and use of advertising and informational materials. Stocks of posters, placards, and recruitment materials contained in the Farm Labor Information Kit were replenished before activities began.
7. Pre-season arrangements were made at both state and local area levels for use of employer-sponsored advertising among radio and newspaper facilities for use at critical times during the various periods of major crop activities.
8. The location of seasonal mobile farm placement offices and periods of operation were tentatively determined by the Farm Placement Supervisor.

Following the custom of previous years, in-season planning was generally limited to local area meetings of state and local office representatives together with local farm labor committees and farm labor associations. These meetings usually took place as near to the beginning of an activity as practicable, but with sufficient time allowed to take action, recruit, and bring in out-of-area workers at the time needed. The primary concern at these meetings was to determine, as precisely as possible, the extent of farm labor shortages for the crop activity under consideration, and to put in motion previously made plans to meet the labor demands. Depending on the severity of the impending shortage one or more of the following steps were taken:

1. Local people were recruited through daily releases over the air and in newspapers.
2. Sound equipment was used in residential areas and elsewhere in local communities within commuting distance of the demand area.
3. Local offices were opened early in the morning to better serve agricultural employers and workers.
4. Clearance orders for workers were extended to other offices of this and other states.
5. Arrangements were made for employers to provide transportation from supply centers of the state to the areas of work--involving in some cases distances up to 230 miles.
6. In those instances where the foreseeable supply of local, intrastate, and interstate workers was insufficient, arrangements were made to import Mexican National workers. In 1953 this phase of the program culminated in the importation of 1,719 Mexicans at the peak of the state's farm activities during early July. At no time were all these foreign workers employed simultaneously, however.

Seasonal Hired Worker Employment^{1/} in Agriculture by
Selected Activity in Washington State, 1953

<u>Activity</u>	<u>April</u>	<u>May</u>	<u>June</u>	<u>July</u>	<u>Aug.</u>	<u>Sept.</u>	<u>Oct.</u>	<u>Nov.</u>
TOTAL.....	11,345	17,271	45,468	53,919	36,069	32,630	35,695	5,033
Asparagus harvest.....	1,045	1,577	770
Sugar beet thin-hoe...	500	1,910	1,036	650	58	60
Hop pruning-training..	2,488	3,865	450
Berry plant. & cult...	669	1,673	700
General orchard work, n.e.c. ^{2/}	1,450	2,580	1,300	751	2,950	2,520	1,000
Fruit thinning.....	270	10,835	6,400
Strawberry harvest....	19,353	11,663
Pea harvest.....	2,692	4,233	1,510
Sweet cherry harvest...	1,300	3,000
Raspberry harvest.....	15,115	6,793
String bean harvest...	7,035	3,145
Potato harvest.....	500	750	925	1,510
Broccoli harvest.....	10	640	618	100
Pear picking.....	325	1,919	186
Apple picking.....	550	21,671
Sugar beet harvest....	1,060	895
ALL OTHER.....	5,193	5,396	7,032	11,607	16,638	22,871	9,650	4,038

1/ All figures represent estimates of seasonal hired workers employed during the week including the 15th of the month and therefore do not necessarily reflect peak employment for the month nor for the activity.

2/ Includes spraying, orchard clean-up, summer pruning, propping trees, making and scattering boxes preliminary to harvesting.

Mechanization

The use of machines in the cultivation and harvesting of Washington's crops has been the practice of the state's farmers for years. Machines are used in many activities notably the following:

<u>Crop</u>	<u>Type of Machine</u>
Wheat, dry peas, and dry beans	Combines
Tree fruits	Speed sprayers
Sugar beets	Mechanical blocker & harvester
Sweet corn	Mechanical picker
Cranberries	Mechanical harvester
Green peas for canning	Swathers, loaders, and viners
Potatoes	Digging machine

Mechanization in 1953 compared with 1952 had its greatest effect in the sugar beets. More blockers were used and tended to reduce the number of workers needed for blocking and hoeing. In the beet harvest about 90 percent of the crop was harvested by machine as compared with 85 percent in 1952.

The weekly "Farm Labor News" published every Friday during the active season also served as an aid to local offices in directing the movement of migratory workers from one area of need to another. Information stations in other states received this weekly news letter and undoubtedly made good use of it in directing interstate workers to this state. A copy of the "Farm Labor News," which contains up-to-date information on current activities, wages, housing and location of work, is appended to this report as attachment number two.

Another aid in directing the flow of migratory workers is the leaflet "Farm Jobs Along Washington Highways." This give-away sheet contains a crop-time-table of major activities and a map showing the major travel-routes and local office locations in the state. Over 8,500 copies of these guides were handed out to migratory workers during the season.

Puerto Ricans

No Puerto Rican contract workers were employed in the state in 1953.

Foreign Workers

The pre-season outlook for seasonal farm labor pointed to a net shortage at the summer peak of about 3,700 workers for the state as a whole. Of these, it was estimated about 1,000 would consist of Canadian Indians who annually come into the state of their own accord for seasonal farm work. The remaining shortage of 2,700 workers would have to be obtained from Mexico, the only other source available to the state's farmers. As the season progressed this net shortage of 2,700 proved to be an overstatement and when the peak of activities arrived in early July only 1,719 Mexican contract workers had been imported into the state. Not even all of these were employed at any one time. By the second half of July Mexican Nationals numbered about 635 and declined to a low of 149 in late August, then increased again to a fall peak in October when 500 were employed.

Beginning in the first half of April 57 Mexican Nationals were employed in the asparagus harvest. In May they were also used in sugar beet thinning and hoeing; then in strawberry picking, apple thinning, pea pitching, and truck garden work. Greatest need for Mexican Nationals occurred in late June and early July. Shortages of domestic workers required their use in the pea harvest. In August Mexicans were employed in the broccoli harvest and in sugar beet hoeing. In September and October most of them worked in the apple harvest although some were employed in the harvests of broccoli, potatoes, miscellaneous vegetables, and pears.

During the season Mexican contract workers were imported by four contracting units: A large food processor, two vegetable growers, and one farm labor association. About five hundred different users employed Mexican Nationals at some time between April 1 and November 15. Use of the Mexicans was distributed among 21 of the states 39 counties and in every one of the state's ten agricultural reporting areas. While the Mexicans were used by 500 different farmers during the season the Employment Security Department made only eight requests for certification. This was made possible through grouping the requests.

Facilitating Services

During the season local offices maintained farm placement services at four farm labor camps. These camps were located at Bayview, Centralia, Granger, and Walla Walla.

The following is a summary of forecasts of employment as reported by the local offices in the ten agricultural reporting areas of the state.

Forecast of Employment of Seasonal Hired Workers
in 1954 in Washington State

Employment Forecast								
Period	Agricultural					Food Processing		
	Total	Domestic		Foreign		Total	Local	Non-Local
		Local	Non-Local	Canadian Indians	Mexican Nationals			
January....	1,138	1,063	50	25	0	526	526	0
February...	1,138	1,063	50	25	0	613	613	0
March.....	3,535	3,190	320	25	0	696	696	0
April.....	12,707	9,647	3,010	50	0	1,374	1,374	0
May.....	20,119	13,469	5,920	200	530	3,127	2,997	130
June.....	64,958	47,356	13,204	2,350	2,048	9,659	8,678	981
July.....	63,791	45,680	11,848	4,375	1,888	11,778	9,914	1,864
August.....	42,904	31,435	7,574	3,400	495	9,815	9,219	596
September..	42,492	27,795	12,910	1,357	430	18,842	16,672	2,170
October....	41,970	25,460	14,855	925	730	17,319	15,009	2,310
November...	10,399	7,659	1,665	735	340	6,175	6,125	50
December...	1,005	930	50	25	0	1,027	1,027	0

Total expected employment of seasonal hired workers is greater in each of the months of April through November than was the case for similar data for 1953. The increases are attributed to several factors. Asparagus and sugar beet acreage will be larger; a normal weather pattern during strawberry, green pea, and cherry harvests will telescope the period of need and therefore require more workers to harvest a larger crop in less time; a larger apple crop accompanied by normally frosty weather during harvest will require more workers than last year. In addition, the monthly estimates more nearly reflect peak employment for the month, rather than employment as of the 15th of the month, a factor attributed to more normal weather expectations for 1954. This weather factor gives rise to from one to three weeks difference in the time an activity occurs and makes comparison with 1953 estimates very difficult.